



Democracy Voucher Program: How to Qualify as a Candidate

The Democracy Voucher Program allows qualified candidates running for Seattle City Council or City Attorney the opportunity to receive funding for their campaigns. **The program will expand to include the Mayor's race in 2021.** For the 2017 election, only candidates running for City Attorney or City Council are eligible to receive funding from the program.

Beginning January 2017, the Seattle Ethics & Elections Commission (SEEC) will distribute four vouchers valued at \$25 each to eligible Seattle residents. To qualify for the program, candidates must file the required paperwork and are encouraged to complete a training with the SEEC about campaign disclosure rules.

STEP 1: REGISTER AS A CANDIDATE & FILE REPORTS

Within two weeks of becoming a candidate, the candidate must file the following reports:

<input type="checkbox"/>	PDC Form C-1	Campaign Registration	PDC (e-file or paper file) and SEEC (e-file)
<input type="checkbox"/>	PDC Form F-1	State Personal Financial Affairs Statement	PDC (e-file or paper file)
<input type="checkbox"/>	SEEC Form F-1	City Personal Financial Affairs Statement	Seattle City Clerk (paper file)

PDC – WA State Public Disclosure Commission **SEEC** – Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission

STEP 2: COLLECT QUALIFYING CONTRIBUTIONS & SIGNATURES

The SEEC will provide a **qualifying contribution petition** for the candidate to begin collecting contributions. The candidate must collect at least \$10 and a signature from Seattle residents who are eligible to contribute to campaigns.

Candidates may collect qualifying contributions and signatures from January 1, 2016 to June 2, 2017.

Minimum signature and contribution requirements for each elected position are listed below:

Candidate Position	City Council At-large	City Council District	City Attorney	Mayor
Number of Signatures with Minimum \$10 Contribution	400	150/75 in-district	150	600 (2021 election)

The Democracy Voucher Program is public and transparent. The names of individuals who sign qualifying contribution petitions, or Democracy Vouchers, or who make campaign contributions are public. Addresses of those who contribute to political campaigns are subject to public disclosure pursuant to state and city campaign disclosure reporting laws (RCW 42.17A and SMC 2.04).

STEP 3: REGISTER FOR DEMOCRACY VOUCHER PROGRAM & SUBMIT PETITIONS TO SEEC

To register for the program, **C-3 Forms** must itemize all qualifying contributions and be filed electronically with the PDC and SEEC. A **C-3** must be filed for each deposit and contributions must be deposited within 5 business days of receipt. The SEEC will review **C-3** filings for timely and accurate reporting and confirm that each contribution corresponds to the names and addresses on the petition.

After a sufficient number of petitions and contributions have been verified, the SEEC will certify the candidate as a qualified participant in the program and list the qualified candidate on the website.

The last day to submit qualified signatures and contributions is before June 2, 2017.

STEP 4: COLLECT DEMOCRACY VOUCHERS

Vouchers may only be collected by the SEEC, the candidate, or the candidate's representatives. Candidate representatives must register with the SEEC first before collecting vouchers.

The SEEC will mail Democracy Vouchers to all registered voters after January 3, 2017. The SEEC will periodically mail vouchers during the year to new registered voters and eligible residents upon request.

Eligible residents include individuals who are a Seattle resident, at least 18 years of age, and are either a U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or lawful permanent resident. An individual registered to vote in another jurisdiction is not eligible to receive Democracy Vouchers.

The last day for an eligible resident to request vouchers from the SEEC is November 1, 2017.

Seattle residents will sign, date, and write the name of the candidate to whom they wish to assign a voucher.

November 30, 2017 is the last day for residents to assign a voucher.

December 1, 2017 is the last day the SEEC will accept vouchers.

STEP 5: REDEEM DEMOCRACY VOUCHERS

The candidate will submit assigned vouchers to the SEEC within five business days of receipt. The SEEC will validate the assigned vouchers and verify the candidate's eligibility to receive voucher proceeds. Vouchers submitted in excess of the primary election's spending limit will not be redeemed unless the candidate advances to the general election.

The SEEC will release voucher proceeds to campaigns at least twice per month.

The SEEC will use its best efforts to project and ensure that adequate program funds are available. If the SEEC believes it will receive Democracy Vouchers in excess of the Available Program Funds Limit for that year, the SEEC will announce that funds are no longer available and provide a process for redeeming the vouchers it has on hand.

STEP 6: MEET ONGOING PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Candidates must file a **Declaration of Candidacy** during the week of May 15-19, 2017 with King County Elections to get their name placed on the ballot. A sufficient number of Qualifying contributions and signatures must be filed and submitted to the SEEC no later than two weeks after the candidate files the **Declaration of Candidacy**.

In addition to complying with campaign disclosure reporting requirements in SMC 2.04, the participating candidate must honor campaign contribution and spending limits.

Democracy Voucher Program Contribution and Expenditure Limits	City Attorney	City Council At-large	City Council District	Mayor (2021)
Individual Contribution Limit*	\$250*	\$250*	\$250*	\$500*
Campaign Expenditure Limits Primary Election Only	\$75,000	\$150,000	\$75,000	\$400,000
Combined Campaign Expenditure Limits for Primary and General Election	\$150,000	\$300,000	\$150,000	\$800,000

**These limits do not include Democracy Voucher values.*

Contributions cannot be solicited or accepted from contractors who have received more than \$250,000 in the last two years through a City contract. The list of contractors with contracts exceeding the limit will be posted on the SEEC website.

Contributions cannot be accepted if a contributor has spent, or has paid someone, more than \$5,000 to lobby the City in the last 12 months. A list of lobbyist employers and their spending can be found on the SEEC's lobbying website here:

<http://web6.seattle.gov/ethics/lobbying/lobbyistEmployers.aspx>

Candidates may not solicit money from any political action committee, political party, or any organization that makes an independent expenditure for or against any City of Seattle candidate within the same election cycle.

Candidates may be released from the program spending limits if the opposition and independent expenditures go beyond the program spending limits.

Candidates must participate in three public debates for the primary elections and the general elections each.

STEP 7: CLOSE OUT YOUR CAMPAIGN

A candidate who withdraws, dies, becomes ineligible, loses qualification, or is eliminated in any primary election or general election or wins a general election will return all unspent voucher proceeds to the SEEC.

This guide is intended for candidates and their campaign committees. Further assistance is available by contacting the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission at 206-684-8500 or visiting the Commission's web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/elections>